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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP A. MACDONALD

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TAGS: PREL PTER YM
SUBJECT: ROYG SEES LONDON CONFERENCE AS FIRST STEP LEADING
TO INCREASED ASSISTANCE

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. In a January 18 meeting with the Ambassador, Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Rashad al-Alimi outlined the ROYG's goals for the January 27 London conference. Alimi expressed the hope that the conference would highlight the ROYG's recent CT operations and its need for security and economic aid. Alimi thought it unlikely that President Saleh would attend the London conference, but said the ROYG had not yet selected its delegation. He suggested the London conference would serve as an introduction to other events, including a GCC-hosted meeting in February that would include specific discussion of assistance Yemen can expect from its neighbors and other donor countries. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) In a January 18 meeting with the Ambassador, Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Rashad al-Alimi identified four areas upon which he hoped the London conference would focus: (1) the ROYG's ongoing CT efforts; (2) the best strategies for confronting terrorism in Yemen in the future; (3) assistance the ROYG needs to enhance its CT capabilities; and (4) Yemen's economic assistance needs, to overcome endemic unemployment and poverty and thereby "dry up the sources of terrorism." The Ambassador pointed out to Alimi that the two-hour conference would not be the ideal venue to discuss specific security assistance needs, and Alimi concurred, although he stated that government agencies have "already submitted lists" in advance of the conference for types of assistance they wish to request from donor countries. He emphasized the need for helicopters to empower Yemen's CT forces to secure sites quickly following airstrikes against AQAP targets. Alimi said that he expected the follow-on conference in late February led by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to serve as a venue for discussion of specific assistance needs.

¶3. (S) Alimi said he did not know whether or not he would attend the London conference and that a final decision on the composition of the Yemeni delegation to London was still pending. He deemed it unlikely that President Saleh would attend, speculating that Prime Minister Ali al-Mujawwar would probably lead Yemen's delegation.

¶4. (S) Alimi also expressed curiosity about the "Friends of Yemen" group, and its ability to support Yemen's current efforts to build the capacity of local government, particularly in areas affected by terrorism and CT operations, and to improve the delivery of basic services like water and electricity. He was keen to see involvement from a range of international donors, including Scandinavian countries, citing their strong capacity in development assistance.

COMMENT

¶5. (S) Alimi's comments suggest that the ROYG understands the limitations of the London conference and its usefulness as a platform for highlighting Yemen's counter-terrorism cooperation and its financial needs to stay on the offensive against AQAP. His comments also show that the ROYG is already looking past London toward discussions leading to concrete offers of security and economic assistance. END COMMENT.

SECHE